

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Please replace the pending claims with the following claim listing:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of dewatering pastes or slurries of particulate inorganic materials in a mould, said method comprising the steps of:-

filling a mould having one or more apertured walls with a flowable paste or slurry of particulate inorganic material; and,

creating a pressure gradient between an inner region of said material in said mould and an outer region of said material in said mould whereby excess water is expressed from said material by ~~a volumetric expansion within said material~~ an internal expansion within said material and wherein external dimensions of an article so moulded remain substantially unchanged during dewatering.

2. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein ~~volumetric~~ internal expansion ~~may be~~ is effected by a mechanical element in said mould.

3. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the mechanical element ~~may~~ comprises one or more expandable core members.

4. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the mechanical element comprises one or more extendable projections associated with at least one inner face of said mould.

5. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein ~~the volumetric~~ internal expansion is effected by expansion of gas bubbles in said cementitious material.

6. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 5 wherein said gas bubbles comprise air entrained in a conventional mixing process.

7. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 5 wherein the said gas bubbles are chemically generated in the paste or slurry.

8. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 5 wherein the said gas bubbles are introduced into said paste or slurry as a frothed liquid.

9. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 5 wherein the said gas bubbles are generated by vaporisation under subatmospheric conditions of an organic composition dispersed in said material.

10. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said pressure gradient is effected by introducing said material into the interior of said mould under superatmospheric pressure and exposing the exterior of said mould to a pressure less than said superatmospheric pressure.

11. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein said pressure less than said superatmospheric pressure is sub-atmospheric pressure.

12. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 5 wherein material in the mould is subjected to an initial dewatering step by the application of mechanical pressure to an external surface of the moulded article.

13. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for manufacture of moulded particulate inorganic materials, said apparatus comprising:-

a hollow mould having one or more apertured walls;

an inlet port for the introduction of a flowable paste or slurry of particulate inorganic material; and,

a pressure inducer to create, in use, a pressure gradient between an inner region of said material in said mould and an outer region of said material in said mould whereby excess water is expressed from said material by a volumetric an internal expansion within said material.

14. (Currently Amended) An apparatus as claimed in claim 13 wherein said pressure inducer comprises a mechanical element in said mould mould.

15. (Original) An apparatus as claimed in claim 14 wherein the mechanical element comprises one or more extendable projections associated with at least one inner face of said mould.

16. (Original) An apparatus as claimed in claim 14 wherein the mechanical element comprises one or more expandable core members.

17. (Currently Amended) An apparatus as claimed in claim 13 wherein said pressure inducer comprises a pump to introduce ~~a gas containing~~ particulate inorganic material containing gas into the interior of [[e]] said mould under superatmospheric pressure.

18. (Original) An apparatus as claimed in claim 13 wherein said pressure inducer includes a vacuum source to form a sub-atmospheric pressure at the exterior of said mould.

19. (Original) An apparatus as claimed in claim 13 wherein said one or more apertured walls comprises a screen member.

20. (Original) An apparatus as claimed in claim 19 wherein said screen member comprises a wedge wire sieve.

21. (Currently Amended) A moulded particulate inorganic article ~~whenever~~ produced according to the method of claim 1.

22. (Currently Amended) A moulded particulate inorganic article ~~whenever~~ produced in an apparatus according to claim 13.

23. (Currently Amended) A masonry building block or brick ~~whenever~~ produced according to the method of claim 1.

24. (Currently Amended) A masonry building block or brick ~~whenever produced in an~~
produced by a method utilizing the apparatus according to claim 13.